

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

WINDBREAK/SHELTERBELT RENOVATION

(ft.)
CODE 650

DEFINITION

Replacing, releasing, and/or removing selected trees and shrubs or rows within an existing windbreak or shelterbelt, adding rows to the windbreak or shelterbelt, or removing selected tree and shrub branches.

PURPOSE

Restoring or enhancing the original planned function of existing windbreaks or shelterbelts.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

In any windbreak or shelterbelt that is no longer functioning properly for the intended purpose.

CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used individually or in combination to restore or enhance the performance of a partially functioning or non-functioning windbreak or shelterbelt:

To reduce plant competition or alter the density of the planting, individual trees or shrubs will be identified for thinning.

To remove diseased branches or alter the density of the planting, the trees or shrubs will be pruned or sheared.

To release adjacent rows of trees or shrubs, entire or partial rows of trees or shrubs will be identified and removed.

To improve density and/or vigor of identified rows of trees or shrubs in decline, trees or shrubs with coppicing capability will be cut close to the ground to allow sprouting.

To improve the growth and vigor of trees and shrubs, competing herbaceous vegetation will be mechanically or chemically controlled.

To improve windbreak or shelterbelt density, additional rows of trees or shrubs will be added

adjacent to or within an existing windbreak or shelterbelt. Existing growing space, shade level and root competition will be evaluated and determined to be at acceptable levels to permit unimpeded growth to new plantings. (Note: extending the length of an existing windbreak is handled under Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment, 380).

Residual plants will be protected during the renovation.

Comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations during the installation, operation and maintenance of this practice.

Burning of vegetation removed during renovation shall follow the criteria and considerations listed in Prescribed Burning (338).

CONSIDERATIONS

Renovation may be accomplished over a period of years.

Debris should be removed from the site and disposed of properly if the debris will cause insect, disease, fire, or operability problems.

Debris and other vegetation removed during renovation may be used to produce energy. Management alternatives should consider the amount of energy required to produce and convert the biomass into energy with the amount produced by the biomass.

Sufficient herbaceous vegetation must be left in the windbreak or shelterbelt following thinning to prevent wind erosion and other natural resource concerns.

Wildlife needs should be considered when selecting tree or shrub species. Species diversity, including use of native species, should be considered.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. The current version of this standard is posted on our website at www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov or may be obtained at your local Natural Resource Conservation Service.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The following actions shall be carried out to insure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life. These actions include normal repetitive activities in the application and use of the practice (operation), and repair and upkeep of the practice (maintenance):

Replacement of dead trees or shrubs in new plantings or rows will be continued until the barrier's function is restored.

Competitive vegetation will be controlled when it inhibits the renewed growth and vigor of the windbreak or shelterbelt.

Supplemental water will be provided as needed.

The trees and shrubs will be inspected periodically and protected from adverse impacts including insects, diseases or competing vegetation. The trees or shrubs will also be protected from fire and damage from livestock or wildlife.

Additional thinning, pruning, or coppice management may be needed in the future to maintain function.

Periodic applications of nutrients may be needed to maintain plant vigor.